

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022 - 2023



*Preserve Protect Enhance*





## IMMERSE YOURSELF

*In March 1867, John Muir was working in a carriage manufacturing factory. A slip of his hand caused a file to puncture his eye. He was struck blind. "My right eye is gone," he said "closed forever on all God's beauty." It changed his life. The blindness lasted several weeks while he stayed in a dark room. When his eyes opened, he saw anew with his left eye and also saw his new future. He knew his final healing would come from immersing himself in nature. ("John Muir's Vision Lost and Found", Taylor, 2015)*

When his sight returned, John Muir traveled widely in search of wildness. A year later he arrived in San Francisco and headed to the Sierra on foot. In 1909, he would visit Mt. Tamalpais and the valley that had just been preserved as "Muir Woods National Monument." The rest is history.

Marin's nature in spring wakes me up. The wildflowers shout their beauty attracting a kaleidoscope of pollinators; wildlife roam; and I become more curious. The closer we look the more fascinating individual creatures or plants appear. On your next walk, consider taking a hand lens to magnify the intricacies of a wildflower; think about using a bird watching application, like Merlin, to identify bird song, or take binoculars to identify them by sight.

We are so fortunate in Marin, to be able to leave asphalt streets and traffic behind and, within minutes, walk into nature and feel restored. This positive engagement can revitalize and inspire creativity and we can get lost in the watching. Let Marin's natural heritage draw you into nature. Share the opportunity with your friends and loved ones, your children and grandchildren.

As you read through MCL's activities in this Annual Report, refresh your interest in saving this glorious planet through local advocacy. Each of us can do something, whether by making our next car purchase an electric vehicle to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, advocating for nature-based adaptations to rising sea levels, or planting native species in our gardens to enhance and support biodiversity. Working together, we enable future generations our same opportunities to enjoy nature and to live on a healthy planet.

Terri Thomas

*"Entice people to look at nature's loveliness," encouraged John Muir.*







## *Our* MISSION

*To preserve, protect and enhance  
the natural assets of Marin in  
a changing environment.*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ Support nature first across all lands and waters.
  - ▶ Act based on best available science.
  - ▶ Integrate climate change understanding into our work.
- ▶ Work for environmental justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
  - ▶ Use diverse approaches for mobilizing action.
  - ▶ Advocate tirelessly for the environment.

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***89 Years of Protecting Marin***  
**1934 - 2023**



## PROTECTING MT. TAM'S WATERSHEDS

**W**illiam Kent's gift of Muir Woods may have been his best-known act of conservation. Certainly his deed of 200 acres in Steep Ravine to the new Mt. Tam State Park in 1928, days before his death, was his final act of conserving land to be "preserved for all time, as far as possible, in its wild and natural state." In between, his other donations of land on Mt. Tam helped create the new municipal water district. But preserving "natural areas" is never a finished task and Mt. Tam has withstood many threats.

*MCL, throughout its 89 years, has been a vigilant "keeper at the gate" of Mt. Tam's natural watersheds. This past year MCL advocated for Marin Water to fulfill its mission to supply clean water and preserve the biodiversity in its watersheds in several important ways.*  
**MCL:**

- Convened partner environmental organizations to advocate collectively that the in-progress *Watershed Recreation Management Plan* (WRMP) should begin with ensuring clean water and protecting biodiversity – and then determine what types and levels of recreation can be accommodated without damage to these values
- Collaborated with other recreational groups in the **Slow and Say Hello** program, which promotes protection of natural resources and safe shared-use of trails by all visitors on all of Marin's public lands.



Photo: Courtesy California State Parks

*"After all," William Kent told his wife, "if we lost all the money we had and saved these trees, it would be worthwhile, wouldn't it?"*

- Recommended the WRMP evaluate 70 miles of non-system trails that, in varying degree, are impacting soils, water quality, vegetation and wildlife, and set priorities for removal or repair.
- Supported Marin Water's "portfolio" approach to resilient water supply, including bolstering conservation, expanding storage, and exploring new supply sources, without compromising the biologically diverse ecosystems of the Mt. Tam watershed.



Photo: Nona Dennis



Photo: NOAA

- Represented MCL's conservation interests on Marin Water's Lagunitas Creek Technical Advisory Committee, supporting stream habitat restoration projects, tracking salmon spawner reports and the status of the salmonid fishery of Lagunitas Creek, and informing MCL members and others.



## PRESERVING AND RESTORING NATURAL ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

**F**ew habitat restoration projects are more gratifying than releasing a small urban creek, long-buried in a culvert, to its historic channel. The initial idea of **daylighting Willow Creek in Sausalito** came in 2011 from parent volunteers and teachers at the Willow Creek Academy, now the Nevada Street Campus of Dr. Martin Luther King Junior Academy. Their vision of a riparian parkway through the school campus and possibly the City, with its huge educational and stewardship opportunities, created a momentum that lasted years and finally achieved success in 2023 with project commitments from the Sausalito Marin City School District and recently approved \$3 million funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

***MCL was pleased to recognize this effort a dozen years ago in its May-June 2011 Newsletter and is proud to continue advocacy for the project on its current path to success. MCL continues to support preservation and restoration planning and projects throughout the county. MCL recently:***

- Reviewed the EIS and Record of Decision for the Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment, focusing on essential strategies to address water quality issues associated with ranching.
- Submitted scoping comments on the upcoming Tomales Point Area Plan, which will include updating the Point Reyes National Seashore's 1998 Tule Elk Management Plan and Environmental Assessment to address the issues of climate change and increased drought frequency. In consultation with Tule Elk reserve managers in other areas of California, MCL recommended that the scope of the Plan be expanded to include a sufficient area of potential effect.
- Continued to monitor salmonid habitat restoration in Lagunitas Creek watershed.
- Continued to track Redwood Creek habitat enhancement projects in Muir Woods and environs.



*After years of promoting and planning the daylighting of Willow Creek, local parents and volunteers secured commitments of local support and Federal funding.*



*Rebuilding the State Parks trail near Redwood Creek—moving it up and out of the wetland..*

- Convened presentations on the Coho Recovery Partnership in the Walker Creek watershed and the effort to realize Coho habitat potential in hopes of increasing the species' ability to persist. Participating agencies included the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Marin Water and its Fisheries Programs, and the Marin Resource Conservation District.



# RESEARCH, EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE FOR MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE

**G**lobally, unprecedented extreme heat and drought, storms and flooding, and wildfires continued to underscore the urgency of the MCL Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) in pushing MCE Clean Energy, Marin jurisdictions and the state of California to accelerate implementation of innovative programs that produce and use renewable energy and sequester carbon. **MCL supported bold actions to mitigate climate change. Specifically, MCL advocated to:**

- 🍃 Increase the pace of building electrification. MCL urged Marin jurisdictions to enact ordinances requiring all-electric new buildings and electrification during major remodels, and to develop county-wide plans to accelerate replacing gas appliances for electric ones in existing buildings.
- 🍃 Protect growth in roof-top solar. MCL opposed the California Public Utilities Commission decision to slash rate-payer subsidies for rooftop solar without increasing funding from other sources.

🍃 Not over-rely on engineered solutions to capture carbon. MCL commented on the California Air Resources Board's 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan that engineered carbon-capture solutions cost far more than reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



*Solar panels, electric vehicles, induction stoves ... rapidly transitioning to clean energy will mitigate damage to our living planet.*

**T**here is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.

Deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions would lead to a discernible slowdown in global warming.

— United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)  
Sixth Assessment Report, March 2023

**CAWG continues to research and develop advocacy positions on emerging innovations that reduce greenhouse gases. Among other topics, recent CAWG speaker presentations addressed:**

- 🍃 24/7 renewable energy that matches renewable energy to demand, on an hourly (not annual) basis;
- 🍃 Virtual power plants that manage flexible customer demand as a grid resource by reducing or shifting demand to periods when energy is cleaner and cheaper;
- 🍃 Capturing offshore wind energy; and
- 🍃 Longer-term innovations that would remove carbon from the atmosphere.



# RESEARCH, EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE FOR MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE

***MCL urged nature-based strategies in adapting to the effects of climate change, like rising sea levels and wildfire risk. MCL continues to participate in sea level rise adaption planning that includes nature-based solutions for the following projects:***

- 🗨️ Sausalito and Stinson Beach shoreline adaptation projects;
- 🗨️ Sea level rise adaptation planning projects and programs in San Rafael's Canal area;
- 🗨️ Studies for design and construction of State Route 37 on a raised causeway– the long-term resiliency solution to reduce traffic congestion, manage flood risk, and restore wetland habitat along the SR 37 right-of-way, increasing the flow of tidal waters, sediment, and wildlife between North Bay watersheds and San Pablo Bay;
- 🗨️ Bothin Marsh Evolving Shoreline project. The heavily used Mill Valley-Sausalito Multiuse Path that will be realigned to eliminate tidal flooding, create tidal marsh enhancement, and resilience to sea level rise is now in design phase.



*Mill Valley-Sausalito Multiuse Path will be realigned to address tidal flooding due to sea level rise.*

***MCL continued to collaborate with fire management agencies, public land managers, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and other stakeholders in efforts to protect native habitat while reducing wildfire risk to structures in Marin's wildland-urban interface. MCL:***

- 🗨️ Convened two workshops – the first was to support the use of beneficial fire as an ecological and cost-effective fuel reduction tool; the second was a 2022 annual reporting of fire fuels work by all agencies. MCL advocated for consistent monitoring across the county.
- 🗨️ Supported the Ecologically Sound Practices Partnership working with Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA).
- 🗨️ Reviewed Marin County Parks, Marin Water, and MWPA annual vegetation management work plans for fuel reduction projects. Visited “before and after” project sites to observe techniques and results.
- 🗨️ Urged MWPA and land managers to monitor vegetation fire risk reduction activities to ensure long-term native habitat stability, evaluate fire prevention effectiveness, and look for cost efficiencies.
- 🗨️ Hosted an educational session on One Tam's *Marin Regional Forest Health Strategy* – now a completed report after a four-year effort. The report identifies threats and stressors to forest health and ecosystem function in Marin and creates a framework for coordinated management, pursuit of funding, and project implementation at a landscape scale.



Still from CAL FIRE LNU video

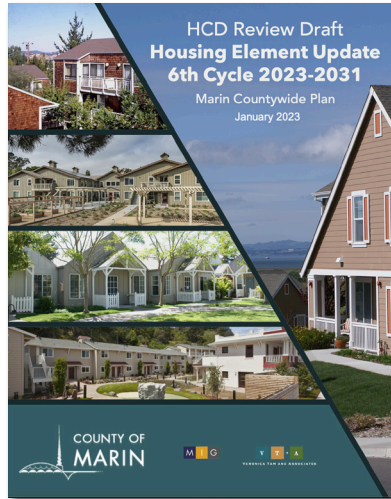


# PROTECTING “ENVIRONMENT” IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

**M**ost of the Marin’s local workforce is unable to live locally, due largely to the high cost of housing. Increased travel from distant locations contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions that could be moderated by providing more affordable housing opportunities within the County.

***MCL promotes affordable housing that does not compromise environmental values and that is preferably infill, close to services, consistent with the capacity of infrastructure, and equitable to all. In recent actions, MCL:***

Supported preserving existing housing stock and also supported new housing for the local workforce, including Habitat for Humanity’s development proposed in Novato, the One Hamilton 45-unit 100% affordable housing proposal in Mill Valley, and the 250-unit Oak Hill 100%



affordable housing proposal west of San Quentin.

- Submitted comprehensive comments on Draft Housing and Safety Elements prepared by the County of Marin and Marin cities and towns.
- Submitted scoping and other comments on environmental review documents prepared for recent development proposals.

***MCL has had a longstanding practice of commenting on CEQA environmental documents concerning proposed developments. MCL has also monitored changes to the CEQA statute and guidelines. Recently MCL:***

- Supported protection of the integrity and value, to both the environment and the public, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which is under heightened siege by critics and the State Legislature.
- Signed a joint letter to legislators, initiated by the Planning and Conservation League (PCL) and signed by dozens of organizations, that opposes problematic amendments to CEQA.

## ≡ Advocacy and education ≡

### *What does advocacy mean?*

Harold Gregg, MCL’s first Executive Director in 1970, offered an explanation of the nature of advocacy. Fifty years later, it still holds true for MCL:

*“Conservation work is appearing at meetings before supervisors, planning agencies, city councilmen. It’s attending conservation meetings and legislative hearings. It’s consulting with city officials, county planners, and specialists like architects, lawyers, and biologists. And sometimes conservation work is going to court to ask for an injunction.”*

**E**arly in its history and for nearly four decades, MCL worked diligently to secure land acquisitions and public ownership of many of Marin’s parks and open space areas, protecting the natural resources that we treasure today.

Since the late 1970’s, MCL has evolved in addressing a host of new threats to the environment, continuing its legacy through advocacy focused on shaping both public policy and land use planning — essential to protecting Marin’s environment.

An important aspect of advocacy is having information. MCL offers a host of conservation-based educational opportunities. Last year alone, MCL hosted over eighty speakers, including US Congressman Jared Huffman; Marin’s state legislators; local government officials; federal, state and



*Mike McGuire at MCL’s Business-Environment Breakfast June 2023*

local agency directors and their staffs; scientists; land managers; and leaders from other community-based organizations.

We invite you to attend our events and programs, to join discussions at issue committee meetings, and to learn, engage and become involved.



# MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE 2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER



The Statement of Activities summarizes MCL's 2022 financial results for MCL as a whole and for each of the separate funds maintained by MCL. The figures are from MCL's financial records and are not audited.

MCL has three funds: The Unrestricted Fund supports MCL's daily operations, advocacy, and education programs. The Temporarily Restricted Fund records MCL's management of funds which are dedicated to specific projects. Finally, the Board Restricted Fund records the income and expenditures of MCL's Legacy of the Land (LOL) endowment. In 2022, this Fund provided \$110,601 in support for MCL's activities.

This year the Unrestricted Fund, due to greater than expected expenses, had an operating loss. The loss was accompanied by a decrease in the value of MCL's investments. The gain in the Temporarily Restricted Funds shows that this year the Friends of the Bayfront Meadow received more support than was spent on their project. During 2022 the Legacy of the Land decreased in value significantly because of market decline.

MCL thanks all of its members for their support during this difficult year.

Richard Jensen, Treasurer

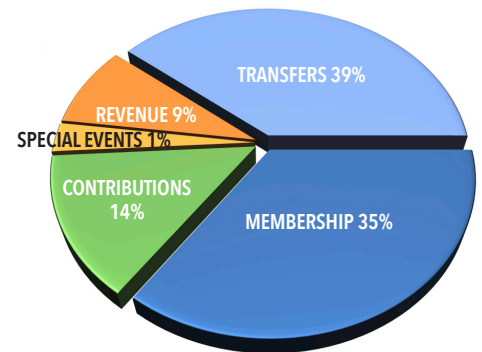
## Statement of Activities (unaudited)

January 1 to December 31, 2022 Prepared from MCL's Financial Statements

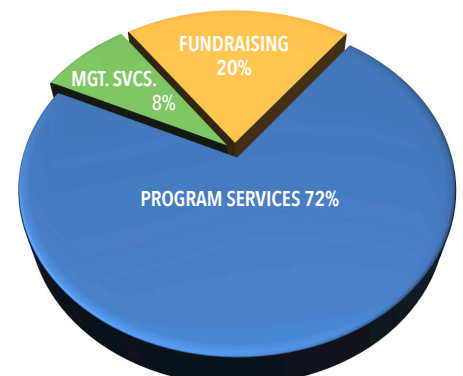
### OPERATIONS

	Unrestricted (Operations)	Temp. Restricted (Projects/Dedicated)	Board Restricted (Legacy of the Land)	Total
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>				
<b>Support</b>				
Membership	\$100,193			\$100,193
Contributions	\$41,063	\$2,875	\$216,642	\$260,580
Special Events	\$8,630			\$8,630
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$149,886</b>	<b>\$2,875</b>	<b>\$216,642</b>	<b>\$369,403</b>
<b>Revenue</b>				
Interest & Dividend Income	\$24,948		\$42,860	\$67,808
Miscellaneous Income	\$0			\$0
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$24,948</b>		<b>\$42,860</b>	<b>\$67,808</b>
<b>Transfers</b>				
Legacy of the Land Support for Operations	\$110,601		(\$110,601)	
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$2,356	(\$2,356)	\$0	
<b>Transfers</b>	<b>\$112,957</b>	<b>(\$2,356)</b>	<b>(\$110,601)</b>	
<b>Total Support, Revenue &amp; Transfers</b>	<b>\$287,791</b>	<b>\$519</b>	<b>\$148,901</b>	<b>\$437,211</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Program Services	\$211,416			\$211,416
Management Services	\$23,726			\$23,726
Fundraising	\$59,399			\$59,399
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$294,541</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$294,541</b>
<b>Results from Operations</b>	<b>(\$6,750)</b>	<b>\$519</b>	<b>\$148,901</b>	<b>\$142,670</b>
<b>Investment Gain, Realized &amp; Unrealized</b>	<b>(\$119,012)</b>	<b>\$710</b>	<b>(\$471,081)</b>	<b>(\$589,383)</b>
<b>Change in Equity 2022</b>	<b>(\$125,762)</b>	<b>\$1,229</b>	<b>(\$322,180)</b>	<b>(\$446,713)</b>
Total Equity, Year End 2021	\$586,442	\$36,325	\$2,491,580	\$3,114,347
<b>Total Equity, Year End 2022</b>	<b>\$460,680</b>	<b>\$37,554</b>	<b>\$2,169,400</b>	<b>\$2,667,634</b>

2022 Income—Operations



2022 Expenses—Operations





*Though unable to thank all of MCL's supporters on these pages, we are grateful for every donation and for what has been for many a long history of continued membership and giving.*



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## Tribute Gifts

Barbara and Bernard Meyers  
in honor of **Nona Dennis** and  
**Susan Stompe**  
The Colin Family Charitable Fund  
in memory of **Doug Wilson**  
Rosalie and Ralph Webb in  
memory of **Don Wilhelm**

**A special thank you to Carlos Porrata** for the use of his photo of Abbott's Lagoon (*on the cover*) and for others throughout this report: long-tailed weasel (*cover*), northern spotted owlets (*pg 3*), tule elk (*pg 5*), western meadowlark (*pg 10*), and Sonoma chipmunk (back cover).

In April, Carlos received MCL's **Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement Award** in recognition of his many contributions to environmental protection in Marin County. In addition to a lifetime of service and leadership in West Marin, Carlos shares his appreciation for natural landscapes and native species through the beauty of his photography.



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## Marin Conservation League 2022-2023 Annual Report

*We must act today if we truly believe in preserving, protecting, and enhancing for the future.*



**MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE**

Marin Conservation League (MCL) works to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural assets of Marin in an era of climate and other environmental changes, focusing its action on issues that are significant countywide or may be precedent-setting.

MCL places particular emphasis on issues having important impacts on Marin's environment—especially native biodiversity and on equity, and quality of life.

MCL seeks effective solutions by advocating and educating, and by collaborating closely with other organizations and the public, to address major environmental challenges and concerns in Marin.

MCL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All donations and dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

***A Legacy of Conservation***

*MCL played a major role in preserving and protecting many of Marin's most stunning and well-loved landscapes.*

*This Annual Report is printed in Marin on recycled paper with soy ink. Text by Terri Thomas, Rich Jensen, Nona Dennis, Bob Miller, Paul Jensen, Martha Richter Smith, and Kate Powers. Edits by Nona Dennis and Kate Powers. Design and production by Kiki La Porta.*

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